Joint maritime exercises by China and Pakistan

*133. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chinese and Pakistani Navies are going to hold joint maritime exercises in the Arabian Sea;

(b) whether Indian security experts view these exercises as potential threats to country's interest;

(c) whether the need to modernize and strengthen Indian Navy has become more important in this scenario; and

(d) the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) Inputs available suggest that the Pakistani and Chinese Navies are likely to hold joint maritime exercises in the Arabian Sea.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Modernisation and strengthening of the Indian Navy is a continuous process. The Ministry of Defence is making efforts to provide the Navy, the equipments, ships and materials commensurate with the threat perceptions and tasks entrusted to the Indian Navy.

Several steps including important acquisitions have been taken to modernize the Indian Navy. Systematic and planned growth of the Navy is being carried out under the 15 year ship building plan.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY : Sir, the Government is aware of the joint exercises in the sea. Keeping in view the experts' view in this regard, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, whether the Government has considered all the implications of China-Pakistan joint naval exercises in regard to the security threat to our country.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Sir, it is the duty of the Government to see that all steps are taken to see that no harm is cause to our country, irrespective of who does what exercises in our seas.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour is over.